

written arguments would not delay the hearing.

(b) *Posthearing briefs.* The hearing officer may request or permit the parties to submit posthearing briefs. The hearing officer may provide for the filing of simultaneous reply briefs as well, if such filing will not unduly delay the issuance of the hearing officer's initial decision. Posthearing briefs shall include proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law; exceptions to rulings of the hearing officer; references to the record in support of the findings of fact; and supporting arguments for the proposed findings, proposed conclusions, and exceptions.

§ 16.237 Waiver of procedures.

(a) The hearing officer shall waive such procedural steps as all parties to the hearing agree to waive before issuance of an initial decision.

(b) Consent to a waiver of any procedural step bars the raising of this issue on appeal.

(c) The parties may not by consent waive the obligation of the hearing officer to enter an initial decision on the record.

**Subpart G—Initial Decisions,
Orders and Appeals**

§ 16.241 Initial decisions, order, and appeals.

(a) The hearing officer shall issue an initial decision based on the record developed during the proceeding and shall send the initial decision to the parties not later than 110 days after the Director's determination unless otherwise provided in the hearing order.

(b) Each party adversely affected by the hearing officer's initial decision may file an appeal with the Associate Administrator within 15 days of the date the initial decision is issued. Each party may file a reply to an appeal within 10 days after it is served on the party. Filing and service of appeals and replies shall be by personal delivery.

(c) If an appeal is filed, the Associate Administrator reviews the entire record and issues a final agency decision and order within 30 days of the due date of the reply. If no appeal is filed, the Associate Administrator may take review of the case on his or her own

motion. If the Associate Administrator finds that the respondent is not in compliance with any Act or any regulation, agreement, or document of conveyance issued or made under such Act, the final agency order includes a statement of corrective action, if appropriate, and identifies sanctions for continued noncompliance.

(d) If no appeal is filed, and the Associate Administrator does not take review of the initial decision on the Associate Administrator's own motion, the initial decision shall take effect as the final agency decision and order on the sixteenth day after the actual date the initial decision is issued.

(e) The failure to file an appeal is deemed a waiver of any rights to seek judicial review of an initial decision that becomes a final agency decision by operation of paragraph (d) of this section.

(f) If the Associate Administrator takes review on the Associate Administrator's own motion, the Associate Administrator issues a notice of review by the sixteenth day after the actual date the initial decision is issued.

(1) The notice sets forth the specific findings of fact and conclusions of law in the initial decision that are subject to review by the Associate Administrator.

(2) Parties may file one brief on review to the Associate Administrator or rely on their posthearing briefs to the hearing officer. Briefs on review shall be filed not later than 10 days after service of the notice of review. Filing and service of briefs on review shall be by personal delivery.

(3) The Associate Administrator issues a final agency decision and order within 30 days of the due date of the briefs on review. If the Associate Administrator finds that the respondent is not in compliance with any Act or any regulation, agreement or document of conveyance issued under such Act, the final agency order includes a statement of corrective action, if appropriate, and identifies sanctions for continued noncompliance.

§ 16.243 Consent orders.

(a) The agency attorney and the respondents may agree at any time before the issuance of a final decision and